



July 2020, Volume 16, Issue 3

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Hello MPEA Friends & Volunteers

We have gone four months without a newsletter and for that we are saddened. As you know, world events have caused lifestyle and workplace disruptions for everyone. Earlier this month, our staff resumed full-time and physically present on-site work schedules. Although we are "back", it still feels like something important is missing around here. That sense of loss is because we haven't been able to host any of our normally scheduled volunteer events since March. Fortunately, our situation is changing, and we are looking forward to having volunteers return under modified circumstances. Certainly, it will be a welcome sight to see everyone's smiling yet masked and properly distanced faces back in the MPEA.

MPEA Updates

Volunteer Updates

Allen, our volunteer coordinator, is working with our Department's volunteer office to implement procedures for bringing back our dedicated, non-paid helpers. Obviously, the goal is to keep everyone safe and to comply with all the new regulations first and then maybe get a bit of fun work accomplished. We are aiming to offer a few new volunteer events and training opportunities as soon as this summer. Trail maintenance options are likely to be the first up as we have not had any of those events in a very long time. Expect for group sizes to be limited and for a few pandemic-related questions prior to registration and participation.

The status of our 2020 Conservation Stewardship Project (CSP) is up in the air. As is customary, there were no events scheduled for July and August. We will have to wait and see what the state of affairs is in mid-September before any determination can be made about the remaining scheduled events. Currently, we are expecting that the CSP will not proceed as originally conceived. Instead, as an alternative option, we will host smaller-scale events on a new set of dates. More information will be forthcoming in the coming weeks and months.

Wildflower Guide

Our most popular event of the year, where visitors could enjoy the spring wildflowers, was cancelled. As an alternative, we have placed a spectacular wildflower reference guide "calendar" on our website! This colorful document was created by one of our very



own volunteers. Paul has labored over this **MPEA Spring Wildflower Calendar** quite a bit and it is rewarding to be able to share it with you. Next spring, take along a copy of Paul's reference calendar and you'll have a greater appreciation of what flowers you are looking at. Thank you, Paul!

Of course, items don't magically appear on our website. Michael, our Natural Resources Technician, is responsible for changing our **site** and he has been updating information regularly. It is worth a look if you have not clicked over there in a bit.

South Wind Trail

With the main entrance up and running in full swing, the visitor presence at South Wind Circle has dropped. The decline in visitors there afforded us the opportunity to go back to the south entrance and freshen it up. Over the past months, we have spruced up the gate, rebuilt the kiosk, made some repairs to the service road, and improved the signage for new visitors.

Perhaps the most noticeable change that people are inquiring about is the new meadow restoration project. As you walk down the gravel road, the area where we are creating another meadow is visible on your right. With time and effort, this newest meadow will look a lot like the surrounding meadows and shrub-scrub habitat.



Scout Projects

In other news, we have a few activities in the works that you may find interesting. A pollinator garden is going to be installed at the end of our service road thanks to a local Girl Scout and her pursuit of the Gold Award. Likewise, a Boy Scout is working towards the rank of Eagle Scout by building and placing bat boxes in a few parks, ours included. Finally, a graduate student is still conducting on-going research in the MPEA on early successional habitat bird species composition.

MPEA Photos



MPEA Wildlife Loop Trailhead, April 15, 2020



Indianpipe (*Monotropa uniflora*), July 2, 2020



Slime Flux on Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), March 25, 2020

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